

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1-7 (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A confocal microscope ~~comprising~~  
adapted to focus a beam of light by way of a mask pattern member  
variably operating with a predetermined pattern and an objective  
lens, and to cause the beam of light reflected by ~~the~~ a specimen  
5 to enter an image pickup means by way of said objective lens and  
said mask pattern member to produce an image of said specimen for  
observation, said microscope comprising:

~~a drive means for driving said image pickup means for an  
image pickup operation in synchronism with the variable operation  
10 of said mask pattern member and modifying the relative distance  
between said objective lens and said specimen along the optical  
axis of the objective lens~~

revolution detection means for detecting a rotary motion of  
a disk which forms said mask pattern member;

15 input pickup trigger means for outputting a trigger signal  
to said image pickup means in synchronism with said rotary motion  
of said disk as detected by said revolution detection means; and

20 distance trigger means for modifying a relative distance  
between said objective lens and said specimen along an optical  
axis of the objective lens in synchronism with said rotary motion  
of said disk as detected by said revolution detection means.

Claim 9 (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) ~~A The~~ confocal microscope according to claim 8, ~~wherein said drive means includes~~ further comprising a Z-stage for carrying said specimen thereon and modifying the relative distance between said objective lens and said specimen  
5 along the optical axis.

11. (Currently Amended) ~~A The~~ confocal microscope according to claim 8, ~~wherein said drive means includes~~ further comprising an objective lens drive means for driving said objective lens along the optical axis of said objective lens and said specimen.

12. (Currently Amended) A confocal microscope ~~according to claim 8, wherein~~ adapted to focus a beam of light by way of a mask pattern member variably operating with a predetermined pattern and an objective lens, and to cause the beam of light  
5 reflected by the specimen to enter an image pickup means by way of said objective lens and said mask pattern member to produce an image of said specimen for observation, said microscope comprising:

~~said mask pattern member is formed by a disk rotatable around a rotary shaft; and~~  
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~~said drive means includes~~

~~a~~ rotary motion control means for controlling ~~the~~ a rotary motion of ~~said~~ a which forms said mask pattern member according to ~~the~~ an NTSC or PAL signal from said image pickup means; and

15      ~~a~~ distance trigger means ~~or~~ for modifying ~~the~~ a distance between said objective lens and said specimen along ~~the~~ an optical axis of said objective lens according to the NTSC or PAL signal from said image pickup means.

Claims 13 and 14 (Canceled).

15. (New) The confocal microscope according to claim 12, further comprising a Z-stage for carrying said specimen thereon and modifying the relative distance between said objective lens and said specimen along the optical axis.

16. (Currently Amended) The confocal microscope according to claim 12, further comprising an objective lens drive means for driving said objective lens along the optical axis of said objective lens and said specimen.